REMARKS

It is noted that, notwithstanding any claim amendments made herein, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements, even if amended herein or later during prosecution.

Claims 1-33 are all of the claims pending in the present Application. Claims 1 and 10 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 17-21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent format. However, Applicants decline to rewrite these claims at this time, since it is believed that the parent claim 10 is allowable over the prior art of record.

As best understood, claim 10 stands rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as anticipated by US Patent 6,405,192 to Brown et al. and by US Patent 6,335,746 to Enokida et al. Claims 22, 23, 29, 30, and 31 stand as rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as anticipated by Enokida. Claims 1-6, 11-13, and 15 stand rejected as unpatentable over Brown, further in view of Enokida. Claims 7-9, 14, and 16 stand rejected as unpatentable over Brown, further in view of Enokida, further in view of US Patent 6,301,586 to Yang et al. Claims 27 and 28 stand rejected as unpatentable over Enokida. Claims 25, 26, 32, and 33 stand rejected as unpatentable over Enokida, further in view of Yang. Claim 24 stands rejected as unpatentable over Enokida, further in view of US Patent 6,070,176 to Downs et al.

These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the following discussion.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

As described and claimed (e.g., by claim 1), the present invention is directed to a method of processing search results obtained in response to a user query. Document pointers returned by a search engine are provided to identify a source from which documents are available. Each of the document pointers includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

At least two visual abstracts are generated for at least one of the documents, each visual abstract being a thumbnail image of a different size. A stream of data is formatted such that when

said data is displayed on a display screen regarding the at least one of the documents, a smaller one of the visual abstracts appears adjacent to a corresponding search result.

An advantage of the present invention over the prior art is that a user can more easily determine relevance of the source document by seeing a thumbnail image of the document and does not need to retrieve the document itself unless it seems sufficiently relevant, thereby saving time and network bandwidth.

II. THE REJECTION BASED ON 35 USC §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

The Examiner continues to reject claims 1 and 10 as being indefinite. However, Applicants again respectfully submit that the Examiner is confused as to the purpose of a rejection based on indefiniteness.

As best understood, the Examiner insists upon rejecting independent claims 1 and 10 until all design details of a specific embodiment have been incorporated into the independent claim. Applicants submit that such is not the purpose of indefiniteness and that it defeats the purpose of the broad claims.

Relative to the Examiner's specific questions/comments, Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art, having taken the disclosure of the present Application as a whole, would readily recognize that the abstracts are not generated from the pointers. As clearly described at lines 2-4 of page 3 of the specification, a search result typically includes the links (e.g., pointers) to the documents reported as being discovered by the search engine.

Relative to the Examiner's second and third question/comment, the origin of the stream of data is well known in the art as being the result of the search engine's operation on a user's query. This known technique is described beginning at line 11 of page 3 of the specification and is well documented in the prior art references brought forward by the Examiner. Applicants particularly bring the Examiner's attention to newly-cited US Patent 6,405,192 to Brown et al.

Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 10 are carefully thought out to focus on specific aspects of the present invention, without getting bogged down in details well known in

the art. It is brought to the Examiner's attention that it is the attorney, not the Examiner or the USPTO, that bears the legal liability for adequate claim language and scope of coverage.

Relative to claim 1, this independent claim focuses on the aspect of the present invention in which two thumbnail images are generated to be incorporated at a part of the search, with the smaller of the two thumbnail images being displayed as part of the search result display. As subsequently described in claim 5, the larger of the two thumbnail images are displayed if the user considers that the document might be of further interest.

The benefit of generating a small thumbnail image and a medium size thumbnail image is that these two images require considerably less time to transmit than the entire document page. As explained in the specification, the small image allows the user to quickly glean more information than available from the conventional search report. The medium size image will provide a larger version that the user can select by moving the pointer over the portion of the search display from that source. If it is deemed from either image that the document is of interest, the user will then select that document by clicking on the URL included in the search report.

Relative to claim 10, Applicants intend to focus on the aspect of the present invention in which a thumbnail image of the search documents are included as part of the search report display.

Concerning the Examiner's implied question as to where the abstracts are generated, Applicants intentionally delete this detail in the independent claim, since a number of embodiments are thereby included. For example, the thumbnail image(s) might be pre-generated and stored in a server. Alternatively, the image(s) might be generated by the server when the document is requested. The server might store the generated image for subsequent requests from other users' search. Still another alternative is that the user's machine generate the image(s).

Applicants do not wish the independent claims to be unduly limiting in any of these possible generation sources, since it is the concept of the thumbnail generation itself, rather than the location of the generation, that is significant. It is noted that, if the Examiner wishes to assume the legal liability for the adequacy of the scope of claim coverage, he should approach his supervisor to request that the USPTO begin the process of changing current patent law.

With the above clarification, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection for indefiniteness.

III. THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

The Examiner alleges that Brown anticipates claim 10.

However, Applicants submit that a key aspect of Brown's presentation of thumbnail images for the search report, as shown in Figure 9 of Brown, differs in method and intent from that of the present invention. Specifically, as described beginning at line 61 of column 9, Brown intends that the thumbnail image be modified to indicate "... to the user the presence or absence of preferred criteria." For example, a dark border might be placed around an image whose document contains the user's undesirable criteria.

However, as can be clearly seen in Figure 9 of Brown, the title of the document will typically be too small on a thumbnail image to be readable. Therefore, in contrast to the method of Brown, the present invention intends that even the small thumbnail image have sufficient information to be useful as a browsing device. Specifically, one feature of the present invention is that, if necessary for readability, the present invention can enhance the title so that it can be assured to be readable. Brown fails to provide this feature to the thumbnail images that it presents, thereby demonstrating that the method of Brown differs from that of the present invention.

Hence, turning to the clear language of the claims, in Brown there is no teaching or suggestion of: "... a title of said document ensured to be readable on each said thumbnail image ....", as required by claim 10. Therefore, claim 10 is clearly patentable over Brown.

The Examiner also alleges that Brown, either alone or in combination with one or more of Enokida and Yang, renders obvious claims 1-9 and 11-16. However, Applicants submit that since Brown was commonly owned by the assignee of the present Application at the time of the present invention and qualifies only under 35 USC §102(e), it is disqualified under 35 USC §103(c) as prior art for purpose of an obviousness rejection. Therefore, Applicants make no further

comments on these rejections based on Brown at this time, since the rejection of record clearly fails to meet the initial burden as presented based on Brown.

Relative to the rejections based on Enokida, the Examiner is understood as alleging that this reference anticipates claims 10, 22, 23, 29, 30, and 31.

However, relative to claim 10, Applicants submit that Enokida is not addressing the problem of an Internet search and, therefore, fails to present a Uniform Resource Locator (URL), as specifically required by the claim language. The description of lines 20-28 of column 6 is that of a file title, not a URL. This term is a term of art and the Examiner is not entitled to ignore the definition understood by one of ordinary skill in the art (e.g., reference MPEP §2111: "The broadest reasonable interpretation of the claims must also be consistent with the interpretation that those skilled in the art would reach."). Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would not consider a document's filename in a filing directory tree as being a URL.

Relative to claim 22, as can clearly be seen in Figure 5 and contrary to the Examiner's allegation, Applicants submit that Enokida fails to provide a written summary.

Relative to claims 23 and 31, Applicants submit that the description at line 65 of column 9 through line 6 of column 10 describes the process of image decompression. In contrast, claims 23 and 31 address the aspect of the present invention in which a portion of the source document is enhanced as part of the preparation of the initial thumbnail image.

Relative to claim 30, Applicants submit that Enokida does not address a search on a "server", as that term is understood in the art. The description in column 5 at lines 23-27 makes reference to an externally connected magnetic disk 130, an entirely different concept from that of a server.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 10, 22, 23, 29, 30, and 31 are clearly patentable over Enokida.

The Examiner relies upon Yang for teaching a "mousing over" method and upon Downs for enhancing a title. Regardless of the propriety of combining these references, neither of them overcomes the deficiencies identified above for Enokida. Hence, all of the remaining claims are allowable, if for no reason other than dependency.

IV. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1-33, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Assignee's Deposit Account No. 09-0441.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: 7/7/04

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CERTIFICATION OF TRANSMISSION

I certify that I transmitted via facsimile to (703) 872-9306 this Amendment under 37 CFR §1.111 to Examiner K. Parton on July 7, 2004.

7/7/04

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